

Who are you calling small?

**Steve L. Monroe**

YSS4274

# What is a small state?

# How do small states (and their residents) behave?

# How do small states (and their residents) behave? Domestically?

How do small states (and  
their residents) behave?  
Domestically?  
Internationally?

# How *should* small states (and their residents) behave?

# Seminar Objectives

- Discuss different definitions and characteristics of small states
- IR Theory Refresher (Realism vs. Liberalism)
- Assess competing arguments about how small states should behave in international politics

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- Discuss different definitions and characteristics of small states (**Long, Gerring and Veenendaal**)
- IR Theory Refresher (Realism vs. Liberalism) (**Thorhallsson**)
- Assess competing arguments about how small states should behave in international politics (**Kausikan, Mahbubani**)



# Outline of Seminar

- 1 Announcements
- 2 What is a small state?
- 3 What are characteristics of small states?
- 4 How should small states behave?
- 5 Mahbubani vs. Kausikan
- 6 Next Seminar: To Dos

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Please email Prof. Monroe your reading presentation preferences by midnight (Rank 3).

# Office Hours!

- Students must attend at least one office hours session before mid-semester break (mid-semester break)
- Monday and Thursday, 13:00 - 15:00, Elm RC2-02-01B,
- Sign up on Calendly

# Bring your name tents!

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There are many definitions of small states.

There are many definitions of small states. What are they?



There are many definitions of small states. What are they? When are they useful?

# Group Activity (I): What is a small state?

Determine the “size” of your state based on three *typologies* of size (Long 2022)

# Typologies of small states (Long 2022)

- Materialistic
- Ideational
- Relational

# Country A: Chile



## Chilean Alpaca

Source: National Geographic for Kids

# Country B: Malaysia



Malayan Tapir

Source: Holidify



# Instructions

- Get in your groups
- Categorise the “size” of your state based on the following typologies (don't be afraid to google!)
  - ▶ Materialistic
  - ▶ Ideational
  - ▶ Relational
- Present your categorisations to the class

# Instructions

- Get in your groups
- Categorise the “size” of your state based on the following typologies (don't be afraid to google!) (10 minutes)
  - ▶ Materialistic
  - ▶ Ideational
  - ▶ Relational
- Present your categorisations to the class (10 minutes)



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# Country A: Chile



## Chilean Alpaca

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# Country B: Malaysia



Malayan Tapir

Source: Holidify



# Country C: Denmark



Greenland Source: Elektor

# Discussion

Which typology do you find most fruitful for understanding small states?



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# Definition → Characteristics

# International Characteristics of Small States

# International: The Melian Dialogue



Dhaka Courier

# International: The Melian Dialogue



Wikipedia

# International: The Melian Dialogue

“The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.” -  
Thucydides

# To Think About

How are academics and policymakers assessing strength?

# To Think About

How are academics and policymakers assessing strength? And how does it pertain to size?



# International Characteristics

- Vulnerable (militarily, economically)
- Assymetrical

# Domestic Characteristics of Small States

# Plato's Republic



## Belinda Blues

# Domestic Characteristics (Gerring and Veenendaal, 2020)

- Democratic
- Accountable
- Homogenous
- Vulnerable (small military)

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# IR Theory 101

Answering this question depends on how you view the world.

# IR Theory 101: Realism



Hobbes' Leviathan Wikipedia

# IR Theory 101: Realism

- “Life is nasty, brutal and short.” - Hobbes
- Power > Principle
- International Anarchy  $\Rightarrow$  Self-Help





# IR Theory 101: Liberalism

- Power and Principle are not zero sum
- International Anarchy  $\Rightarrow$  International organisation
- Dependence  $\Rightarrow$  Cooperation

# Liberalism in the News



Mothership

“A world order where might is right, or the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must, would be profoundly inimical to the security and survival of small states. We cannot accept one country attacking another without justification, arguing that its (Ukraine’s) independence was the result of ‘historical errors and crazy decisions’ .” - Singaporean Ambassador to the UN Burhan Gafoor.

How would an IR Realist respond to Ambassador Gafoor's quote?

How would an IR Realist respond to Ambassador Gafoor's quote? Write down your thoughts!

# To Think About

- What advice would an IR realist give to a small state policymaker?
- What advice would an IR liberalist give to a small state policymaker?

# What's a small state to do?

## Status-Seeking vs Shelter Theory (Thorhallsson)



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# Qatar Blockade (2017)



Source: Qatar Government

By Invitation

# *Qatar: Big lessons from a small country*

Qatar's experience reminds Singapore of the need for small states to behave like small states, and to cherish regional and international institutions.

Kishore Mahbubani For The Straits Times

Minister Shanmugam, diplomats  
Bilahari and Ong Keng Yong say Prof  
Mahbubani's view on Singapore's  
foreign policy 'flawed'

# Group Activity 2: Mahbubani vs. Kausikan

- Get in your team
- Answer questions
- Present to class

# Group Activity 2: Question

- What is your statesmen's argument? Does their argument align with any theories you read about (Realism, Liberalism, Shelter, Status)?
- How does your statesmen's define state size? How do they characterise small states?
- What are areas of commonality between Mahbubani and Kausikan? Differences?
- What role do large states play in their argument?
- What role do domestic politics play in their argument?
- Do you buy their argument?

# Group Activity 2: Mahbubani vs. Kausikan

- Get in your team
- Answer questions (15 minutes)
- Present to class (10 minutes)

# Group Activity 2: Question

- What is your statesmen's argument? Does their argument align with any theories you read about (Realism, Liberalism, Shelter, Status)?
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- What role do large states play in their argument?
- What role do domestic politics play in their argument?
- Do you buy their argument?



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# Next Seminar: To Dos

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- To Read: The Perils of Geography

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  - ▶ When is territorial size a blessing or curse?
  - ▶ A lot of reading (roughly 80 pages). Be strategic!

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- To Read: The Perils of Geography
  - ▶ When is territorial size a blessing or curse?
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- Email Prof Monroe your reading presentation preferences by 5:00 pm!

# Have a great weekend!